**Law and Order**

O. Henry

I found myself in Texas recently, revisiting old places and vistas. At a sheep ranch where I had sojourned many years ago, I stopped for a week. And, as all visitors do, I heartily plunged into the business at hand, which happened to be that of dipping the sheep.

Now, this process is so different from ordinary human baptism that it deserves a word of itself. A vast iron cauldron with half the fires of Avernus beneath it is partly filled with water that soon boils furiously. Into that is cast concentrated lye, lime, and sulphur, which is allowed to stew and fume until the witches’ broth is strong enough to scorch the third arm of Palladino herself.

Then this concentrated brew is mixed in a long, deep vat with cubic gallons of hot water, and the sheep are caught by their hind legs and flung into the compound. After being thoroughly ducked by means of a forked pole in the hands of a gentleman detailed for that purpose, they are allowed to clamber up an incline into a corral and dry or die, as the state of their constitutions may decree. If you ever caught an able-bodied, two-year-old mutton by the hind legs and felt the 750 volts of kicking that he can send though your arm seventeen times before you can hurl him into the vat, you will, of course, hope that he may die instead of dry.

But this is merely to explain why Bud Oakley and I gladly stretched ourselves on the bank of the nearby *char* *co* after the dipping, glad for the welcome inanition and pure contact with the earth after our muscle-racking labours. The flock was a small one, and we finished at three in the afternoon; so Bud brought from the *mor* *ral* on his saddle horn, coffee and a coffeepot and a big hunk of bread and some side bacon. Mr. Mills, the ranch owner and my old friend, rode away to the ranch with his force of Mexican *tra* *ba* *j* *ado* *res*.

While the bacon was frizzling nicely, there was the sound of horses’ hoofs behind us. Bud’s six-shooter lay in its scabbard ten feet away from his hand. He paid not the slightest heed to the approaching horseman. This attitude of a Texas ranchman was so different from the old-time custom that I marvelled. Instinctively I turned to inspect the possible foe that menaced us in the rear. I saw a horseman dressed in black, who might have been a lawyer or a parson or an undertaker, trotting peaceably along the road by the *ar* *ro* *yo*.

Bud noticed my precautionary movement and smiled sarcastically and sorrowfully.

“You’ve been away too long,” said he. “You don’t need to look around any more when anybody gallops up behind you in this state, unless something hits you in the back; and even then it’s liable to be only a bunch of tracts or a petition to sign against the trusts. I never looked at that *hom* *b* *re* that rode by; but I’ll bet a quart of sheep dip that he’s some double-dyed son of a popgun out rounding up prohibition votes.”

“Times have changed, Bud,” said I, oracularly. “Law and order is the rule now in the South and the Southwest.”

I caught a cold gleam from Bud’s pale blue eyes.

“Not that I—” I began, hastily.

“Of course you don’t,” said Bud warmly. “You know better. You’ve lived here before. Law and order, you say? Twenty years ago we had ’em here. We only had two or three laws, such as against murder before witnesses, and being caught stealing horses, and voting the Republican ticket. But how is it now? All we get is orders; and the laws go out of the state. Them legislators set up there at Austin and don’t do nothing but make laws against kerosene oil and schoolbooks being brought into the state. I reckon they was afraid some man would go home some evening after work and light up and get an education and go to work and make laws to repeal aforesaid laws. Me, I’m for the old days when law and order meant what they said. A law was a law, and a order was a order.”

“But—” I began.

“I was going on,” continued Bud, “while this coffee is boiling, to describe to you a case of genuine law and order that I knew of once in the times when cases was decided in the chambers of a six-shooter instead of a supreme court.

“You’ve heard of old Ben Kirkman, the cattle king? His ranch run from the Nueces to the Rio Grande. In them days, as you know, there was cattle barons and cattle kings. The difference was this: when a cattleman went to San Antone and bought beer for the newspaper reporters and only give them the number of cattle he actually owned, they wrote him up for a baron. When he bought ’em champagne wine and added in the amount of cattle he had stole, they called him a king.

“Luke Summers was one of his range bosses. And down to the king’s ranch comes one day a bunch of these Oriental people from New York or Kansas City or thereabouts. Luke was detailed with a squad to ride about with ’em, and see that the rattlesnakes got fair warning when they was coming, and drive the deer out of their way. Among the bunch was a black-eyed girl that wore a number two shoe. That’s all I noticed about her. But Luke must have seen more, for he married her one day before the *ca* *bal* *lard* started back, and went over on Canada Verde and set up a ranch of his own. I’m skipping over the sentimental stuff on purpose, because I never saw or wanted to see any of it. And Luke takes me along with him because we was old friends and I handled cattle to suit him.

“I’m skipping over much what followed, because I never saw or wanted to see any of it—but three years afterward there was a boy kid stumbling and blubbering around the galleries and floors of Luke’s ranch. I never had no use for kids; but it seems they did. And I’m skipping over much what followed until one day out to the ranch drives in hacks and buckboards a lot of Mrs. Summers’s friends from the East—a sister or so and two or three men. One looked like an uncle to somebody; and one looked like nothing; and the other one had on corkscrew pants and spoke in a tone of voice. I never liked a man who spoke in a tone of voice.

“I’m skipping over much what followed; but one afternoon when I rides up to the ranch house to get some orders about a drove of beeves that was to be shipped, I hears something like a popgun go off. I waits at the hitching rack, not wishing to intrude on private affairs. In a little while Luke comes out and gives some orders to some of his Mexican hands, and they go and hitch up sundry and divers vehicles; and mighty soon out comes one of the sisters or so and some of the two or three men. But two of the two or three men carries between ’em the corkscrew man who spoke in a tone of voice, and lays him flat down in one of the wagons. And they all might have been seen wending their way away.

“‘Bud,’ says Luke to me, ‘I want you to fix up a little and go up to San Antone with me.’

“‘Let me get on my Mexican spurs,’ says I, ‘and I’m your company.’

“One of the sisters or so seems to have stayed at the ranch with Mrs. Summers and the kid. We rides to Encinal and catches the International, and hits San Antone in the morning. After breakfast Luke steers me straight to the office of a lawyer. They go in a room and talk and then come out.

“‘Oh, there won’t be any trouble, Mr. Summers,’ says the lawyer. ‘I’ll acquaint Judge Simmons with the facts to-day; and the matter will be put through as promptly as possible. Law and order reigns in this state as swift and sure as any in the country.’

“‘I’ll wait for the decree if it won’t take over half an hour,’ says Luke.

“‘Tut, tut,’ says the lawyer man. ‘Law must take its course. Come back day after to-morrow at half-past nine.’

“At that time me and Luke shows up, and the lawyer hands him a folded document. And Luke writes him out a check.

“On the sidewalk Luke holds up the paper to me and puts a finger the size of a kitchen door latch on it and says:

“’decree of ab-so-lute divorce with cus-to-dy of the child.’

“‘Skipping over much what has happened of which I know nothing,’ says I, ‘it looks to me like a split. Couldn’t the lawyer man have made it a strike for you?’

“‘Bud,’ says he, in a pained style, ‘that child is the one thing I have to live for. *She* may go; but the boy is mine!—think of it—I have cus-to-dy of the child.’

“‘All right,’ says I. ‘If it’s the law, let’s abide by it. But I think,’ says I, ‘that Judge Simmons might have used exemplary clemency, or whatever is the legal term, in our case.’

“You see, I wasn’t inveigled much into the desirableness of having infants around a ranch, except the kind that feed themselves and sell for so much on the hoof when they grow up. But Luke was struck with that sort of parental foolishness that I never could understand. All the way riding from the station back to the ranch, he kept pulling that decree out of his pocket and laying his finger on the back of it and reading off to me the sum and substance of it. ‘Cus-to-dy of the child, Bud,’ says he. ’don’t forget it—cus-to-dy of the child.’

“But when we hits the ranch we finds our decree of court obviated, *nol* *le pros* *sed*, and remanded for trial. Mrs. Summers and the kid was gone. They tell us that an hour after me and Luke had started for San Antone she had a team hitched and lit out for the nearest station with her trunks and the youngster.

“Luke takes out his decree once more and reads off its emoluments.

“‘It ain’t possible, Bud,’ says he, ‘for this to be. It’s contrary to law and order. It’s wrote as plain as day here—“Cus-to-dy of the child."’

“‘There is what you might call a human leaning,’ says I, ‘toward smashing ’em both—not to mention the child.’

“‘Judge Simmons,’ goes on Luke, ‘is a incorporated officer of the law. She can’t take the boy away. He belongs to me by statutes passed and approved by the state of Texas.’

“‘And he’s removed from the jurisdiction of mundane mandamuses,’ says I, ‘by the unearthly statutes of female partiality. Let us praise the Lord and be thankful for whatever small mercies—’ I begins; but I see Luke don’t listen to me. Tired as he was, he calls for a fresh horse and starts back again for the station.

“He come back two weeks afterward, not saying much.

“‘We can’t get the trail,’ says he; ‘but we’ve done all the telegraphing that the wires’ll stand, and we’ve got these city rangers they call detectives on the lookout. In the meantime, Bud,’ says he, ‘we’ll round up them cows on Brush Creek, and wait for the law to take its course.’”

“And after that we never alluded to allusions, as you might say.

“Skipping over much what happened in the next twelve years, Luke was made sheriff of Mojada County. He made me his office deputy. Now, don’t get in your mind no wrong apparitions of a office deputy doing sums in a book or mashing letters in a cider press. In them days his job was to watch the back windows so nobody didn’t plug the sheriff in the rear while he was adding up mileage at his desk in front. And in them days I had qualifications for the job. And there was law and order in Mojada County, and schoolbooks, and all the whiskey you wanted, and the Government built its own battleships instead of collecting nickels from the school children to do it with. And, as I say, there was law and order instead of enactments and restrictions such as disfigure our umpire state to-day. We had our office at Bildad, the county seat, from which we emerged forth on necessary occasions to soothe whatever fracases and unrest that might occur in our jurisdiction.

“Skipping over much what happened while me and Luke was sheriff, I want to give you an idea of how the law was respected in them days. Luke was what you would call one of the most conscious men in the world. He never knew much book law, but he had the inner emoluments of justice and mercy inculcated into his system. If a respectable citizen shot a Mexican or held up a train and cleaned out the safe in the express car, and Luke ever got hold of him, he’d give the guilty party such a reprimand and a cussin’ out that he’d probable never do it again. But once let somebody steal a horse (unless it was a Spanish pony), or cut a wire fence, or otherwise impair the peace and indignity of Mojada County, Luke and me would be on ’em with habeas corpuses and smokeless powder and all the modern inventions of equity and etiquette.

“We certainly had our county on a basis of lawfulness. I’ve known persons of Eastern classification with little spotted caps and buttoned-up shoes to get off the train at Bildad and eat sandwiches at the railroad station without being shot at or even roped and drug about by the citizens of the town.

“Luke had his own ideas of legality and justice. He was kind of training me to succeed him when he went out of office. He was always looking ahead to the time when he’d quit sheriffing. What he wanted to do was to build a yellow house with lattice-work under the porch and have hens scratching in the yard. The one main thing in his mind seemed to be the yard.

“‘Bud,’ he says to me, ‘by instinct and sentiment I’m a contractor. I want to be a contractor. That’s what I’ll be when I get out of office.’

“‘What kind of a contractor?’ says I. ‘It sounds like a kind of a business to me. You ain’t going to haul cement or establish branches or work on a railroad, are you?’

“‘You don’t understand,’ says Luke. ‘I’m tired of space and horizons and territory and distances and things like that. What I want is reasonable contraction. I want a yard with a fence around it that you can go out and set on after supper and listen to whip-poor-wills,’ says Luke.

“That’s the kind of a man he was. He was home-like, although he’d had bad luck in such investments. But he never talked about them times on the ranch. It seemed like he’d forgotten about it. I wondered how, with his ideas of yards and chickens and notions of lattice-work, he’d seemed to have got out of his mind that kid of his that had been taken away from him, unlawful, in spite of his decree of court. But he wasn’t a man you could ask about such things as he didn’t refer to in his own conversation.

“I reckon he’d put all his emotions and ideas into being sheriff. I’ve read in books about men that was disappointed in these poetic and fine-haired and high-collared affairs with ladies renouncing truck of that kind and wrapping themselves up into some occupation like painting pictures, or herding sheep, or science, or teaching school—something to make ’em forget. Well, I guess that was the way with Luke. But, as he couldn’t paint pictures, he took it out in rounding up horse thieves and in making Mojada County a safe place to sleep in if you was well armed and not afraid of requisitions or tarantulas.

“One day there passes through Bildad a bunch of these money investors from the East, and they stopped off there, Bildad being the dinner station on the I. & G. N. They was just coming back from Mexico looking after mines and such. There was five of ’em—four solid parties, with gold watch chains, that would grade up over two hundred pounds on the hoof, and one kid about seventeen or eighteen.

“This youngster had on one of them cowboy suits such as tenderfoots bring West with ’em; and you could see he was aching to wing a couple of Indians or bag a grizzly or two with the little pearl-handled gun he had buckled around his waist.

“I walked down to the depot to keep an eye on the outfit and see that they didn’t locate any land or scare the cow ponies hitched in front of Murchison’s store or act otherwise unseemly. Luke was away after a gang of cattle thieves down on the Frio, and I always looked after the law and order when he wasn’t there.

“After dinner this boy comes out of the dining-room while the train was waiting, and prances up and down the platform ready to shoot all antelope, lions, or private citizens that might endeavour to molest or come too near him. He was a good-looking kid; only he was like all them tenderfoots—he didn’t know a law-and-order town when he saw it.

“By and by along comes Pedro Johnson, the proprietor of the Crystal Palace *chi* *li-con-car* *ne* stand in Bildad. Pedro was a man who liked to amuse himself; so he kind of herd rides this youngster, laughing at him, tickled to death. I was too far away to hear, but the kid seems to mention some remarks to Pedro, and Pedro goes up and slaps him about nine feet away, and laughs harder than ever. And then the boy gets up quicker than he fell and jerks out his little pearl-handle, and—bing! bing! bing! Pedro gets it three times in special and treasured portions of his carcass. I saw the dust fly off his clothes every time the bullets hit. Sometimes them little thirty-twos cause worry at close range.

“The engine bell was ringing, and the train starting off slow. I goes up to the kid and places him under arrest, and takes away his gun. But the first thing I knew that *ca* *bal* *lard* of capitalists makes a break for the train. One of ’em hesitates in front of me for a second, and kind of smiles and shoves his hand up against my chin, and I sort of laid down on the platform and took a nap. I never was afraid of guns; but I don’t want any person except a barber to take liberties like that with my face again. When I woke up, the whole outfit-train, boy, and all—was gone. I asked about Pedro, and they told me the doctor said he would recover provided his wounds didn’t turn out to be fatal.

“When Luke got back three days later, and I told him about it, he was mad all over.

“‘Why’n’t you telegraph to San Antone,’ he asks, ‘and have the bunch arrested there?’

“‘Oh, well,’ says I, ‘I always did admire telegraphy; but astronomy was what I had took up just then.’ That capitalist sure knew how to gesticulate with his hands.

“Luke got madder and madder. He investigates and finds in the depot a card one of the men had dropped that gives the address of some *hom* *b* *re* called Scudder in New York City.

“‘Bud,’ says Luke, ‘I’m going after that bunch. I’m going there and get the man or boy, as you say he was, and bring him back. I’m sheriff of Mojada County, and I shall keep law and order in its precincts while I’m able to draw a gun. And I want you to go with me. No Eastern Yankee can shoot up a respectable and well-known citizen of Bildad, ’specially with a thirty-two calibre, and escape the law. Pedro Johnson,’ says Luke, ‘is one of our most prominent citizens and business men. I’ll appoint Sam Bell acting sheriff with penitentiary powers while I’m away, and you and me will take the six forty-five northbound to-morrow evening and follow up this trail.’

“‘I’m your company,’ says I. ‘I never see this New York, but I’d like to. But, Luke,’ says I, ’don’t you have to have a dispensation or a habeas corpus or something from the state, when you reach out that far for rich men and malefactors?’

“’did I have a requisition,’ says Luke, ‘when I went over into the Brazos bottoms and brought back Bill Grimes and two more for holding up the International? Did me and you have a search warrant or a posse comitatus when we rounded up them six Mexican cow thieves down in Hidalgo? It’s my business to keep order in Mojada County.’

“‘And it’s my business as office deputy,’ says I, ‘to see that business is carried on according to law. Between us both we ought to keep things pretty well cleaned up.’

“So, the next day, Luke packs a blanket and some collars and his mileage book in a haversack, and him and me hits the breeze for New York. It was a powerful long ride. The seats in the cars was too short for six-footers like us to sleep comfortable on; and the conductor had to keep us from getting off at every town that had five-story houses in it. But we got there finally; and we seemed to see right away that he was right about it.

“‘Luke,’ says I, ‘as office deputy and from a law standpoint, it don’t look to me like this place is properly and legally in the jurisdiction of Mojada County, Texas.’

“‘From the standpoint of order,’ says he, ‘it’s amenable to answer for its sins to the properly appointed authorities from Bildad to Jerusalem.’

“‘Amen,’ says I. ‘But let’s turn our trick sudden, and ride. I don’t like the looks of this place.’

“‘Think of Pedro Johnson,’ says Luke, ‘a friend of mine and yours shot down by one of these gilded abolitionists at his very door!’

“‘It was at the door of the freight depot,’ says I. ‘But the law will not be balked at a quibble like that.’

“We put up at one of them big hotels on Broadway. The next morning I goes down about two miles of stairsteps to the bottom and hunts for Luke. It ain’t no use. It looks like San Jacinto day in San Antone. There’s a thousand folks milling around in a kind of a roofed-over plaza with marble pavements and trees growing right out of ’em, and I see no more chance of finding Luke than if we was hunting each other in the big pear flat down below Old Fort Ewell. But soon Luke and me runs together in one of the turns of them marble alleys.

“‘It ain’t no use, Bud,’ says he. ‘I can’t find no place to eat at. I’ve been looking for restaurant signs and smelling for ham all over the camp. But I’m used to going hungry when I have to. Now,’ says he, ‘I’m going out and get a hack and ride down to the address on this Scudder card. You stay here and try to hustle some grub. But I doubt if you’ll find it. I wish we’d brought along some cornmeal and bacon and beans. I’ll be back when I see this Scudder, if the trail ain’t wiped out.’

“So I starts foraging for breakfast. For the honour of old Mojada County I didn’t want to seem green to them abolitionists, so every time I turned a corner in them marble halls I went up to the first desk or counter I see and looks around for grub. If I didn’t see what I wanted I asked for something else. In about half an hour I had a dozen cigars, five story magazines, and seven or eight railroad time-tables in my pockets, and never a smell of coffee or bacon to point out the trail.

“Once a lady sitting at a table and playing a game kind of like pushpin told me to go into a closet that she called Number 3. I went in and shut the door, and the blamed thing lit itself up. I set down on a stool before a shelf and waited. Thinks I, ‘This is a private dining-room.’ But no waiter never came. When I got to sweating good and hard, I goes out again.

“’did you get what you wanted?’ says she.

“‘No, ma’am,’ says I. ‘Not a bite.’

“‘Then there’s no charge,’ says she.

“‘Thanky, ma’am,’ says I, and I takes up the trail again.

“By and by I thinks I’ll shed etiquette; and I picks up one of them boys with blue clothes and yellow buttons in front, and he leads me to what he calls the caffay breakfast room. And the first thing I lays my eyes on when I go in is that boy that had shot Pedro Johnson. He was setting all alone at a little table, hitting a egg with a spoon like he was afraid he’d break it.

“I takes the chair across the table from him; and he looks insulted and makes a move like he was going to get up.

“‘Keep still, son,’ says I. ‘You’re apprehended, arrested, and in charge of the Texas authorities. Go on and hammer that egg some more if it’s the inside of it you want. Now, what did you shoot Mr. Johnson, of Bildad, for?’

“And may I ask who you are?’ says he.

“‘You may,’ says I. ‘Go ahead.’

“‘I suppose you’re on,’ says this kid, without batting his eyes. ‘But what are you eating? Here, waiter!’ he calls out, raising his finger. ‘Take this gentleman’s order.

“‘A beefsteak,’ says I, ‘and some fried eggs and a can of peaches and a quart of coffee will about suffice.’

“We talk awhile about the sundries of life and then he says:

“‘What are you going to do about that shooting? I had a right to shoot that man,’ says he. ‘He called me names that I couldn’t overlook, and then he struck me. He carried a gun, too. What else could I do?’

“‘We’ll have to take you back to Texas,’ says I.

“‘I’d like to go back,’ says the boy, with a kind of a grin—‘if it wasn’t on an occasion of this kind. It’s the life I like. I’ve always wanted to ride and shoot and live in the open air ever since I can remember.’

“‘Who was this gang of stout parties you took this trip with?’ I asks.

“‘My stepfather,’ says he, ‘and some business partners of his in some Mexican mining and land schemes.’

“‘I saw you shoot Pedro Johnson,’ says I, ‘and I took that little popgun away from you that you did it with. And when I did so I noticed three or four little scars in a row over your right eyebrow. You’ve been in rookus before, haven’t you?’

“‘I’ve had these scars ever since I can remember,’ says he. ‘I don’t know how they came there.’

“‘Was you ever in Texas before?’ says I.

“‘Not that I remember of,’ says he. ‘But I thought I had when we struck the prairie country. But I guess I hadn’t.’

“‘Have you got a mother?’ I asks.

“‘She died five years ago,’ says he.

“Skipping over the most of what followed—when Luke came back I turned the kid over to him. He had seen Scudder and told him what he wanted; and it seems that Scudder got active with one of these telephones as soon as he left. For in about an hour afterward there comes to our hotel some of these city rangers in everyday clothes that they call detectives, and marches the whole outfit of us to what they call a magistrate’s court. They accuse Luke of attempted kidnapping, and ask him what he has to say.

“‘This snipe,’ says Luke to the judge, ’shot and wilfully punctured with malice and forethought one of the most respected and prominent citizens of the town of Bildad, Texas, Your Honor. And in so doing laid himself liable to the penitence of law and order. And I hereby make claim and demand restitution of the State of New York City for the said alleged criminal; and I know he done it.’

“‘Have you the usual and necessary requisition papers from the governor of your state?’ asks the judge.

“‘My usual papers,’ says Luke, ‘was taken away from me at the hotel by these gentlemen who represent law and order in your city. They was two Colt’s.45’s that I’ve packed for nine years; and if I don’t get ’em back, there’ll be more trouble. You can ask anybody in Mojada County about Luke Summers. I don’t usually need any other kind of papers for what I do.’

“I see the judge looks mad, so I steps up and says:

“‘Your Honor, the aforesaid defendant, Mr. Luke Summers, sheriff of Mojada County, Texas, is as fine a man as ever threw a rope or upheld the statutes and codicils of the greatest state in the Union. But he—’

“The judge hits his table with a wooden hammer and asks who I am.

“Bud Oakley,’ says I. ‘Office deputy of the sheriff’s office of Mojada County, Texas. Representing,’ says I, ‘the Law. Luke Summers,’ I goes on, ’represents Order. And if Your Honor will give me about ten minutes in private talk, I’ll explain the whole thing to you, and show you the equitable and legal requisition papers which I carry in my pocket.’

“The judge kind of half smiles and says he will talk with me in his private room. In there I put the whole thing up to him in such language as I had, and when we goes outside, he announces the verdict that the young man is delivered into the hands of the Texas authorities; and calls the next case.

“Skipping over much of what happened on the way back, I’ll tell you how the thing wound up in Bildad.

“When we got the prisoner in the sheriff’s office, I says to Luke:

“‘You, remember that kid of yours—that two-year old that they stole away from you when the bust-up come?’

“Luke looks black and angry. He’d never let anybody talk to him about that business, and he never mentioned it himself.

“‘Toe the mark,’ says I. ’do you remember when he was toddling around on the porch and fell down on a pair of Mexican spurs and cut four little holes over his right eye? Look at the prisoner,’ says I, ‘look at his nose and the shape of his head and—why, you old fool, don’t you know your own son?—I knew him,’ says I, ‘when he perforated Mr. Johnson at the depot.’

“Luke comes over to me shaking all over. I never saw him lose his nerve before.

“‘Bud,’ says he. ‘I’ve never had that boy out of my mind one day or one night since he was took away. But I never let on. But can we hold him?—Can we make him stay?—I’ll make the best man of him that ever put his foot in a stirrup. Wait a minute,’ says he, all excited and out of his mind—‘I’ve got something here in my desk—I reckon it’ll hold legal yet—I’ve looked at it a thousand times—“Cus-to-dy of the child,"’ says Luke—‘"Cus-to-dy of the child.” We can hold him on that, can’t we? Le’me see if I can find that decree.’

“Luke begins to tear his desk to pieces.

“‘Hold on,’ says I. ‘You are Order and I’m Law. You needn’t look for that paper, Luke. It ain’t a decree any more. It’s requisition papers. It’s on file in that Magistrate’s office in New York. I took it along when we went, because I was office deputy and knew the law.’

“‘I’ve got him back,’ says Luke. ‘He’s mine again. I never thought—’

“‘Wait a minute,’ says I. ‘We’ve got to have law and order. You and me have got to preserve ’em both in Mojada County according to our oath and conscience. The kid shot Pedro Johnson, one of Bildad’s most prominent and—’

“‘Oh, hell!’ says Luke. ‘That don’t amount to anything. That fellow was half Mexican, anyhow.’”